



Toybox Nursery

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	142865
Inspection date	27 February 2007
Inspector	Brenda Joan Flewitt
Setting Address	8 Linden Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA20 2BH
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Registered person	Toybox Yeovil Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are inadequate - enforcement action. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Toy Box Day Nursery was registered in 1991. It is privately owned and operates from a converted three bedroomed house, situated near to the town centre of Yeovil, Somerset. Children have use of two main play rooms, toilets and changing facilities downstairs, and an upstairs room for sleeping. There is also an office and separate staff room and facilities situated upstairs. An enclosed part paved, part grassed garden is available at the rear of the premises for outside play. The nursery is open from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday, all year round, except for two weeks over the Christmas period.

The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 18 children at any one time. There are currently 28 children under the age of five years on roll. Of these, 16 are funded for early education.

The nursery employs six members of staff to work with the children, this includes an overall manager who holds NVQ 3 qualifications. The rest of the team either hold or are working towards relevant early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's healthy lifestyle is promoted appropriately for most children. They make choices from nutritious snacks and freshly cooked lunches. For example, at snack time they choose from a selection of fruit which is displayed attractively, including apple, orange and banana. The lunch time menu includes toad-in-the-hole, goulash and fisherman's pie. All children join together to eat, and develop skills in using cutlery appropriate to their stage of development. Children are offered milk or water to drink at these times, however, they cannot easily access a drink if they are thirsty at other times, because the resources are not readily available. This means that some young children are not offered a drink for over two and half hours. Older children usually take part in daily outside activities which means they get fresh air and exercise. They use large equipment such as wheeled vehicles, bats and balls which helps promote large muscle skills. Younger children in the nursery do not have a sufficient range of opportunities for indoor and outdoor play which promotes their good health. Children in the baby room do not regularly take part in outside activities. Although babies sleep in spacious, high-sided cots when they are tired, there are limited furnishings and equipment in either room to enable children to rest and relax. Babies who are starting to walk have few opportunities to practise this skill, as there is limited furniture and equipment in the baby room to encourage them to pull themselves up to standing.

Children learn some good procedures for their own personal hygiene. The toilet and hand washing facilities are easily accessible from the pre-school room, which means that children develop confidence in using them without help. Children are protected from the spread of infection through some routine procedures such as staff cleaning tables before and after meals, and providing liquid soap and paper towels for hand washing. There is a clear policy which informs parents that children must not attend if they have an infectious illness. However, used nappies are stored in an open bin in the toilet area used by children, which increases the risk of germs being spread.

Children's medication and accidents are appropriately managed. Most of the staff have up-to-date first aid training and the relevant documentation is completed to record accidents, and medicines administered to children, therefore, promoting their health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in safe and secure premises where hazards and risks are identified and minimised. Staff carry out daily checks to ensure that the environment is appropriate for the children to play safely. They put measures in place to help prevent accidents which include socket covers, the safe storage of hazardous substances, and safety gates to prevent children

accessing the stairs. The good security arrangements mean that children are protected from uninvited visitors and that they cannot leave the building unsupervised. The layout of the pre-school room sometimes restricts children's access to resources because they cannot easily move round the tables and chairs. A variety of equipment is used to help children stay safe while eating and sleeping. This includes high chairs with harnesses, and high sided cots. There is adequate low-level furniture to allow children to access their activities safely and eat together at meal times. Sleeping babies are well protected as they are physically checked on a regular basis and plug-in monitors allow staff to hear when they have woken.

Children learn what is expected if they must leave the building in an emergency, as they are involved in regular fire drills and staff are clear on their responsibilities. This helps towards children's safety in a real situation. Children are protected on outings through staff routine procedures which includes increasing the adult-to-child ratio, and making sure that a phone and first aid equipment is readily available. Children are made aware of crossing roads safely which helps them start to take responsibility for their own safety. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of how to recognise signs of abuse and the procedures to follow with concerns. There is up-to-date information available for reference. This all contributes towards safeguarding children's safety and welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Younger children's individual needs are not being met and their welfare is not always promoted. Although the Birth to three matters framework is being used to plan activities suitable for young children over a period of time, children in the baby room have restricted opportunities to make choices and select from a range of resources. For example, during a morning session the options provided only include toy vehicles, or books displayed in a rack. Later in the day building blocks, large push-along type toys, or books are offered. This means that children lack sufficient stimulation. There are times when there is insufficient adult interaction to support each child appropriately to be confident, make progress and to build their self-esteem. Passive children who do not demand attention are not always acknowledged, particularly at busy times such as clearing up after lunch. For example, a baby sits in a high chair for approximately an hour, without any toys or stimulation once he has been given his lunch.

Staff record observations of the children's achievements and use these to inform the progress records. The assessment system for the younger children does not clearly link to the Birth to three framework. Therefore, it is not fully effective in informing planning for each child's next step.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Overall, staff have a satisfactory understanding of the Foundation Stage. They use this to plan an appropriate range of activities, linked by themes and topics, that cover the six areas of learning, over a period of time. Planning is coordinated by the supervisor, links to the stepping stones and indicates the learning intention for adult-led activities. Other members of staff offer ideas for specific activities. A general evaluation is completed at the end of each week, however, this is not specific enough to indicate

how successful the activity was in helping the children learn. Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Staff record observations of children's activity and achievements, they use these to highlight the stage they have reached along the stepping stones, but there is no clear system for using this to plan for each child's next stage. Some staff interact positively with the children to help them recall, think and count, but this is inconsistent across the team. They do not make the most of daily play and routine opportunities to encourage children to solve problems. Therefore, children are not being encouraged to reach their full potential in all areas.

Most children are confident within the group. Many will initiate conversations with adults and each other. Some like to share events in their lives and talk freely about home life. One child tells a member of staff about her rabbit eating pancakes and another excitedly talks to the group about a merry-go-round at a circus. They develop independence in practical skills such as using the toilet and hand washing facilities, managing their coats and shoes, and using cutlery at meal times. However, due to the organisation of resources, children cannot expand on this independence by choosing their own activities or selecting resources for themselves to initiate their own play and extend their own learning.

Children are starting to recognise their written names through daily activities which include finding their own coat peg and their name label at snack time. Some older children are beginning to identify initial sounds and link them with letters. Children take part in activities that promote writing skills as they use one-handed tools such as pencils, paint brushes, glue spreaders and spoons. They attempt to write their names on their work during adult-led activities, some older children can form some recognisable letters. However, there are few opportunities for children to write spontaneously or as part of their play, as the resources are not easily accessible. Children sometimes hear and use numbers for counting, for example as they count how many children are present or how many carpet squares are needed for each child to have one. They look at shapes and comparison through topic work and planned activities like 'compare bears', but do not regularly use mathematical language linked to space and measure, or solve problems during everyday activities.

Children explore and investigate a variety of materials through activities like messy play, art and cooking. For instance, as children make chocolate nests, they look at the change in the chocolate before and after it has melted and then take turns to scrunch up shredded wheat and stir it into the mixture. They manipulate dough into specific shapes using rolling pins and cutters, one child describes it as 'sticky'. Children often make collage pictures using a range of different materials like tissue paper, cotton wool, felt and newspaper, however these are usually formed on shapes pre-determined by adults. There is very little opportunity for children to express their own ideas or be creative spontaneously. Children start to become aware of time through regular routine, and learn about the place they live when they visit venues such as the local pet shop. There, they observe various animals and talk about how to care for them. Children have few opportunities to develop skills with technology. They occasionally help change a CD at song time, and sometimes use a toy computer, however, children only use a real computer in the term before they go to school.

Children move around with confidence and coordination, showing an awareness of others. A favourite time is the weekly 'Jumping Beans' session, run by a professional gym coach. Children

learn to move in various ways and use different equipment to help their physical development. For example, there is much laughter as children stretch and bend making a parachute 'ripple' while others take turns to run and jump on the top, or swap with the person 'opposite'. They use their imagination as they make intended movements to 'build a house', moving round and round to 'mix cement' and shaking the parachute to 'build foundations'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children behave well. They know the routine and respond well to being given tasks of responsibility such as helping to carry plates of food from the kitchen at lunch time. Children are generally patient as they wait for staff to organise activities, and learn to take turns through routine and in their play. Children sometimes receive praise and encouragement for their efforts and achievements, which helps build their self-esteem. They start to develop an awareness of belonging and being part of a community. They like to see their work displayed on the wall, and are made to feel special on their birthdays as they share cake with their friends. Older children regularly go on visits to venues such as the church or the post office when they look at different features of the local environment. Planned topics include learning about 'Different Countries' which gives children an awareness of the wider world. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are provided with appropriate information about the setting by way of an introduction pack, and a notice board in the entrance hall. This tells them about staff, the weekly menu, topics and activities. Staff make themselves available as parents deliver and collect their children to exchange information towards meeting children's individual needs. Parents of children under the age of one year are supplied with a brief daily report about sleep patterns, nappy changes and food intake. All parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress twice a year, or by appointment at other times. This contributes towards children's continuity of care and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The organisation of the space available, resources and staff deployment does not meet every child's needs effectively. The number of different carers for babies and toddlers is not minimised to help them feel secure and help them progress, as staff constantly move from room to room throughout the day. The organisation of some sessions leaves some children without focus and with limited choices. For example, following lunch time, all children stay in the pre-school room as staff clear up and change nappies. Some older children play outside while others can only choose from plastic bricks or books. Younger children in particular have restricted choices due to the arrangement of the space available, organisation of resources, and lack of outside play. The setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Staff are suitably qualified and, overall, provide a daily routine where children know what to expect, so they settle quickly. For example, they know they must wash their hands before meals times and wait patiently as lunch is served. There are clear procedures for vetting staff and the

induction process is satisfactory in making new staff aware of their roles and responsibilities. All the required records are in place, stored confidentially and completed clearly.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff meet regularly to discuss children's development, areas for improvement, and to take part in in-house training. However, the evaluation of planned activities is still not effective, and staff are not always consistent in their approach. Staff are well supported to attend training. Staff appraisals are carried out every six months which sometimes helps identify where training is needed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the quality of care was judged as inadequate. Actions were set requiring the provider: to ensure children's safety through use of a risk assessment; to make sure that children are provided with a suitable balance of activities by improving how the play areas are used; to plan and provide suitable activities for children under the age of three years; and to review staff deployment to ensure all children's needs are adequately supported.

Children's safety has improved. This is because the staff carry out daily risk assessments to ensure that there are measures in place to help prevent accidents. The manager carries out spot checks to monitor that safety procedures such as putting the chain across the front door, are being carried out consistently.

Although a few minor changes have been made to the way the play areas are used, the outcome for the children has not changed significantly. Children in the pre-school room can now access books more easily, however, the organisation of the play room for younger children does not allow them to access a wide variety of resources and experiences. Children in the pre-school room cannot easily access a full range of resources to encourage free choice.

Although some activities planned for the younger children are suitable for their age group, there is a lack of variety of activities at any one time to meet individual needs, and staff interaction is insufficient at times, to support the children in their development.

The staff deployment at the start of the day has been reorganised to include more qualified staff, and a rota is in place to ensure that one person answers the door so that this causes less disruption for children at this time of the day. However, staff deployment is still not effective in meeting all children's needs particularly at busy times. This leads to children not having sufficient adult interaction or choice of resources.

The nursery education inspection recommended: that the assessment and planning systems were developed to provide children with sufficient challenge; that more use is made of the everyday routines, such as mealtimes, to support and promote all areas of children's development; and that systems were developed for monitoring the provision to effectively identify and fully address areas for improvement.

Staff carry out regular observations to inform children's assessment records, but there is still not a clear system to use these to plan for each child's next step. Therefore, children are not always encouraged to reach their full potential.

Opportunities for children to develop skills through every day routines have been increased to an extent. Children are encouraged to find their name cards at snack time, they help distribute food and drink, and develop practical skills such as pouring water or opening their milk cartons.

The nursery welcomes support from outside agencies to help monitor the provision. However, progress in addressing the actions set at the at the last inspection has not been fully successful.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

Ofsted is taking **enforcement action** to safeguard the welfare of children.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review the organisation of resources to enable children to initiate and extend their own play and learning
- develop the evaluation of activities and assessment to help plan each child's next step
- develop consistency amongst staff in their interaction with the children, to help children practise skills and solve problems.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk